

REHEARSAL.

1. A New *Objection* of the *Difficulty* to Know what *Rebellion* is.
2. All *Sins* have their *Subterfuges*.
3. Our *Duty* Easy to be *Known* by an *Honest* Mind.
4. A *Guard* against *Wicked Casuistry*.
5. The *Cause* of our *Doubting* in our *Duty*.
6. Of *Excusing* one *Sin*, and *Condemning* Another. Wherein of the *Difference* berwixt *Spiritual Sins*, and *Sins* of the *Flesh*.
7. An *Answer* to the *Objection* of not knowing the *Utmost Extent* of *Prerogative*.
8. The new *Reply* of *Observer* to the *Instance* I gave of *Marriage*, &c. as to the *Force* of *Examples*. The *Whiggs* *Profess* to be the *Queen's* best *Subjects*, because they *Own* their *Power* to *Coerce* and *Dethrone* her.

WEDNESDAY, November 27. 1706.

(1.) *Country-man*.

ALL you have said in your last, *Master*, Signifies Nothing, unless you can tell us Clearly what *Rebellion* is. For I have been in Company since, and they tell me that *Rebellion* is indeed a great *Immorality* and a *Sin*. But then they Puzzle me to know what *Rebellion* is. They say the *Fallacie* lyes there. And they have so many *Distinctions*, *Reservations*, and *Quiddities*, as they Call them, that my Head is turn'd Round again. They say I must go to *Lawyers* and *Learned* Men, to know when such a *Case* is a *Rebellion* or not. For that poor *Country-Men* can no more know this, than other *Nice* and *Intricate* Points in *Law*. They ask me if I can tell the utmost *Extent* of *Prerogative*, to say, *Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther*? And then, say they, How canst thou tell when the *Resisting* it is a *Rebellion*, and when not? Help me out in this, *Master*, if you Can. Else all the Pains you have taken with your *Country-Man* is like to be Lost.

(2.) *Rehearsal*. There is no *Sin* but has its *Subterfuges*, and *Excuses*. And the Plainest *Sins* have been *Distinguish'd* into *Nothing*, Nay, Turn'd into *Virtues*, by Men of *Art* and *Cunning*. There may be some *Difficult Cases*, as is seen in our *Books* of *Casuistry*. But in the Main, and in the Great and General *Duties* of *Christianity*, the *Rule* is *Plain* to any *Honest* and *Well-Designing* Mind. As I doubt not to make it *Appear* in the *Present Case*. Look over all the *Decalogue*, and see what *Niceties* and *Distinctions* have been made use of to get over Every one of the *Commandments*. How has the *Church* of *Rome* *Distinguish'd* away the *Second*? What *Disputes* have we had about the *Fourth*? What *Stretch*es have been made upon the *Sin* of the *Second Table*, even in *Principles*? Witness the *Jesuits* *Morals*, and of *Others* not far *Inferior*.

Country-m. Now you *Confound* me more, *Master*. For how shall a poor *Country-Man* that has no *Learning*, *Guide* himself among all these *Subtilties* and *Niceties*?

(3.) *Rehears*. If he have but an *Honest* Mind, all these things are made *Plain* and *Easy* to him. He will then make a *Hedge* about the *Law*, and *Refrain* from every *Appearance* of *Evil*. He will *Flie* from *Sin*, as from the *Face* of a *Serpent*, that is, not come *Near* it. Who will *Pity* him that *Plays* upon the *Hole* of an *Asp*, if he be *Bit*? Our *Blessed Saviour* says, that he who *Looks* upon a *Woman* to *Lust* after her, is an *Adulterer*. And that he who is *Angry* with his *Brother*, without a *Cause*, is in *Danger* of the *Judgment*. And *St. John* says, that he who *Hateth* his *Brother* is a *Murderer*. And we are *Commanded* not to *Defraud* or *Over-Reach* one another in any *Matter*, but to *do* to *Others*, as we wou'd have them *do* to *Us*. We are not so much as to *Covet* any thing that is our *Neighbours*. And we must not *Lie* to one another, but speak the *Truth* from the *Heart*, then we Cannot bear *False-Witness*. And he who *Curses* his *Father* or his *Mother*, or *Despises* them, *Sins* against the *5th Commandment*. The *Disobedient Son* was to be *Ston'd* to *Death*. Then surely doing any *Injury* to our *Parents* is *Forbidden*, either in their *Reputation*, or their *Persons*, or *Estates*.

(4.) Here is a short *Comment* upon the *Six Commandments* of the *Second Table*, *Plain* and *Clear* and *Full*. And in which ther is no *Doubt* at all to an *Honest* Mind, that is *Dispos'd* to *Love* and *Obe*y the *Commandments* of *God*, and that has *Regard* to his own *Soul*. What have we then to do with the wicked *Casuistry* of those, who tell us how near we may come to any *Sin*, without being *Guilty* of it? Who tell us in what *Sense*, and with what *Distinctions*, we may *Kill*, *Lie*, *Steal*, &c. Whereas every willing *Approach* to *Sin*, is *Sinfull*, and shews our *Inclination* to it. He that *Seeks* will find, in a *Bad Sense*, as well as a *Good*. He that once comes to *Distinctions* and *Salvoes* about his *Duty*, is *Wear*y of it, and wou'd be *Glad* to get *Rid* of it, and he seldom misses to find out the *Means*. But he that wou'd be *Secure*, must *Strengthen* himself in the *Ways* of the *Lord*, must *Hate* and *Detest* all *Sin*, must put on the whole *Armour* of *God*, and

and prepare himself to Resist Temptation. But if he seeks to Compound with Sin, and wishes such a thing were not a Sin, that he might Comply with it, that Man has Sinn'd already, he is Gon, and will go on all the way, even to the Excess of Sin. Ther is no Stop, when a Man is come to that State. The Will is Corrupted, and Inclines to Yield. The Christian Courage is Gon, and we no longer Resist she Devil: The greatest Difficulty Men find in overcoming themselves to do Evil, is in the Struggles of a Virgin Conscience, before it be Debauched. But when the first Modesty is once got over, the Rest is Easy, and comes of it self, even to Prostitution. They Begin with Fear and Scruples; but End in Hardness of Heart, and a Seared Conscience.

(5.) Country-m. You have, Master, spoke to my Heart. I am fully Convinc'd that our Duty is Plain and Easy. And that the Cause of its being Difficult is, when we Entangle our selves; And that is, when our Interest, Fear, or other Corrupt Passions do Blind and Byass our Reason, and Weakens our Faith. In short, when we are more full of the World than of God, and Preferr Present to Eternity.

(6.) Hence it comes likewise, that Men are Furious against one Sin, and very Gentle towards another. This comes not from the Fear of God, to whom all Sins are Hateful. But (you may always observe it) ther is something of Party and Interest in the Case; or of Violent Bent and Inclination. An Adulterer may Hate a Thief, and a Thief Despise a Drunkard. Ther is no Man given to all Sins. But most Men have some Beloved Sin, which they wou'd Excuse. And shew their Zeal in Crying out against other Sins.

They Compound for Sins they are Inclind to, By Damning those they have no Mind to.

Thus have we seen Men Drench'd in Blood and Rebellion, in Schism and Sacrilege; Rend their Throats against Prophanation of the Sabbath, and Observing of Days. These Spiritual Men make the least of Spiritual Sins. The Devil is a Spirit, and cannot be Guilty of Sins of the Flesh. He cannot Whore nor Drink. Yet he is the Devil still. But Back-Biting, False-Accusation, Malice, and Envy, Division, and Sedition Describe his Nature (who is a Lyar from the Beginning, and the Accuser of the Brethren) more than many Sins which belong to the Body, and of which he is not Capable. Rebellion is call'd Witch-Craft in the Holy Scriptures, and the common Epithet of Rebels is Sons of Belial. Which shews we Learn'd this Sin from the Devil, who was the first Rebel. And it is of a much Higher Class in Wickedness than the ordinary Sins of the Flesh. And Spiritual Sins of all sorts are Greater Sins, and of a more Heinous Nature than those of the Body. Thus Spiritual Pride is far Greater than any other Pride. It makes Men Fancy themselves Prophets, and Apostles, and Angels, nay God Himself, or Part of God, as some have done. And this makes them Despise all other Men, and look down upon them, far more than a Silly Beau sine Dress'd Values Himself above the common Rank, for

the Fashion of his Cloaths, or the Nicety of his Strut.

Now I think those the greatest Sins which make us Approach nearer to the Nature of the Devil. As those are the Brightest Vertues which bring us nearer to the Nature of God, who is Justice, Mercy, Truth, and Goodness.

Therefor when I see Men set themselves up for more Spiritual than others, and call themselves the Saints of the Earth; And yet make little or nothing of Spiritual Sins, I must suspect a Delusion. As when I see a Man severe against Stealing from himself or another, and yet make a Jest of Sacrilege, which is a Robbing of God: When I see a Ser of Men Preach up Peace and Unity among themselves, and yet Tear the Church in Pieces by their Schism, and the Nation by Rebellion, I conclude them very Carnal, and their Pretences to be Hypocritical. For, as our Saviour says, By their FRUITS ye shall know them.

(7.) But now, Master, That I may not want an Answer to every thing they Objeſt, I wou'd desire a Direct Solution to what I offer'd at first, of my knowing the exact Limits of the Prerogative of the Crown, in all Cases; which if I do not, how then shall I know when it Exceeds? And must I not go to Lawyers for that, and Trust to them?

Rehears. How far the Prerogative Reaches in Particular Cases, you must know from the Lawyers. For the King having Limited himself by the Law, the Law is the Rule, when this Comes to be Apply'd to any Particular Case. And the King has Granted to Us, to Plead the Law with him in all such Cases. But this Concerns not any thing that I have said. I only plead against any Coercive Power over the King. For this wou'd be a total Dissolution of the Government. It wou'd set up Two SOVERAIGN Powers, or Two MILLIONS, if it be Plac'd in the People. And the Law allows of No Coercion over the King, in any Case: These Laws I have Quoted, and they are the Standing Laws at this Day: And this no Man can Deny.

Country-m. What then do the Whiggs say?

(8.) Rehears. They tell Storys of Kings that have been Coerc'd, and Particularly Name K. John. To which I Answer'd, That 10000 Instances might be given of the Breach of other Commands of God, particularly of Marriage, for one Instance of the Coercing of Kings. Yet that this did not Abrogat any of these Commands of God. To which the Observer of the 20th Instant Reply'd, by naming that of K. John over again, with 2 or 3 more, but without taking any Notice of what I had said upon it.

Country-m. And he might have nam'd the Coercing of K. Char. I. for another Instance. They are Lost, Master, and their Cause is Confounded. Every Man must see it. But what a Sight is it to see them Talk to the Queens Face of their Power to Coerce and De-throne Her, and Value themselves upon it, as Her best Subjects!

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